

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
COLORADO SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND
FY 2008-09 JOINT BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING AGENDA**

**Friday, December 14, 2007
11:20 am – 11:40 am**

Introductions and Opening Comments

School Goals and Objectives

1. What are your principal goals and objectives? What are the metrics by which you measure success or failure?

Response:

The six areas of the CSDB strategic plan are listed below.

Statewide and Regional Resource Network

Every eligible child in Colorado, birth to 21, who has been identified with a sensory disability, will have increased quality learning experiences and successful integration into their chosen academic setting, post-secondary settings, and the community through collaboration between CSDB's Statewide and Regional Resources Services Network, school districts, and families.

Early Childhood

Colorado children who are deaf/hard of hearing or blind/visually impaired will demonstrate age-appropriate language, educational achievements, and developmental skills commensurate with those of their typically developing peers birth to age five. "Peers" can be represented by a given child's chronological age or developmental age.

Academic Core

Students will be prepared for acceptance and success in a post-secondary setting through the provision of a rigorous secondary curriculum with a focus on literacy, mathematics, core academic content and unique knowledge that promotes positive self-identity, communication skills, responsibility, cultural understanding, and independence.

Secondary Vocational Job Skills

Students will acquire the necessary skills to enter into the workforce or further vocational training.

Transition

Transition students (18-21 year olds) will have the knowledge, skills, motivation and/or support to better themselves in order to be as responsible and independent as possible by maximizing their potential in the following areas: vocational/education, life skills, recreational/leisure, social/emotional, and self advocacy as measured by improvements towards goals established in their individualized transition plan (ITP).

Multiple Disabilities

CSDB will develop cutting-edge curricula/programming, provided by highly qualified staff, including the residential/student life program, for its students with multiple disabilities to include those

considered to be high risk in the School for the Deaf and in the School for the Blind by utilizing any and all available resources.

Success is measured, in part, by the following performance measures. (See the Strategic Plan portion of the FY08-09 Budget Request for specific benchmark and actual numbers).

- *Graduation rate*
- *Attendance rates*
- *Literacy gains*
- *Math gains*
- *Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals completion*
- *Parent involvement compacts*
- *Parent survey results*
- *Number of outreach trainings, technical assistance and direct service contacts*
- *Number of statewide opportunities for parent activities and training*
- *Placement of transition students in community jobs, college programs or vocational training*
- *Placement of On-the-Job-Training seniors in jobs within the community or on the CSDB campus*
- *Improve expressive language skills in children, birth to three years, statewide*
- *Show improvement in frequency of families reading books in the ELDI program*

2. Given the change in the Administration, have there been any changes to your principal goals and objectives since last year?

Response:

No, however we are moving ahead on the energy audit plans.

3. What progress did you make during the last year in achieving your goals?

Response:

Statewide and Regional Resource Network

During the last school year, the committee working on this goal addressed actions steps outlined in seven target areas and monitored progress in completing those action steps through monthly “accountability” meetings. Those targets included: 1) exploring possibilities of regional programs locally and statewide, 2) providing technology support to school districts/ BOCES through the equipment loan bank for students who are deaf/hard-of-hearing, 3) expanding the provision of individual educational and psychological assessments free of charge to school districts/BOCES, 4) providing funding for meaningful social opportunities through regional activities for students who are deaf/hard-of-hearing, and 5) improving communication with school districts/BOCES and parents to clarify procedures for accessing outreach support. The final two target areas focus on increasing the opportunities for evaluation feedback from consumers of the services and in developing a center at CSDB with materials and resources for educational providers and parents related to the use of cochlear implants.

Additionally, a survey requesting information about current areas of need for outreach services

was sent to educational providers throughout the state who serve students who have hearing or vision loss and to special education directors. The results of the survey have been reviewed and a request to add a target area related to developing professional training opportunities will be submitted to the CSDB Board of Trustee at their February, 2008 meeting. The other two primary areas of need identified by survey respondents focused on the need for training and access to current technology and the need for expanded communication opportunities between CSDB and educational providers throughout the state. The committee felt the last two areas were already included in the current Strategic Plan goals and were being addressed.

Early Childhood

The CSDB Colorado Home Intervention Program (CHIP) assesses the language abilities of participating children who are deaf or hard of hearing through the use of the Kent Inventory of Developmental Skills and the Minnesota Child Development Inventory. The percentage of children demonstrating expressive language skills within the normal range was essentially the same in calendar year 2006 as was seen in the previous year (85% within the normal range in 2005; 82% within the normal range in 2006). Note that for children with cognitive delays, their language scores were calculated relative to their cognitive (not chronological) age. The percentage of children scoring within the normal range in 2006 was equivalent to the benchmark that had been set for that calendar year. Children enrolled in CHIP are served year round.

CSDB provided several trainings to the CHIP Parent Facilitators (providers). Trainings included information on pre-literacy and literacy development, family participation, tools and protocols to facilitate learning in the home, and the development and use of play to foster speech and language skills, developmental skills, and cognitive skills. Providers also attended trainings provided by other entities pertaining to auditory and spoken language development and sign language development. Also, the CSDB Colorado Hearing Resource Coordinators (CO-Hears) provide mentoring to Parent Facilitators regionally.

A primary goal of the Early Literacy Development Initiative (ELDI) is to increase the frequency with which parents read books to their child who is deaf or hard of hearing. In one strand of the ELDI, specifically the Shared Reading Project (SRP), a high percentage (89%) of families read a book with their child that was loaned to them by their SRP Tutor at least several times a week. Book reading is a relatively new component in the second (Integrated Reading Project) strand of ELDI with this strand having its origins as simply an in-home sign instruction program. In this strand of ELDI, 52% of families report they read a loaned book to their child several times a week. Collectively between the two programs, 65% of families read a loaned book with their child at least several times a week. This percentage matches the target set for the year 2007. On average, parents rated the level of helpfulness of receiving these children's books on loan as 4.4 on a scale of 1 to 5 (with "5" being "extremely helpful"). Regarding the ELDI services overall, 98% of parents rated the program as "very good" or "excellent". Extensive ELDI instructor/tutor training has been conducted during 2007 with a focus on strategies to increase parents' comfort, skill, and frequency in book reading with their child.

CSDB provided three regional trainings to the ELDI instructors and tutors. The trainings included information on parent involvement ratings, new procedures and forms, new assessment

procedures, and strategies to support family involvement. CSDB also provided a two-day comprehensive training to promote and foster pre-literacy and literacy development. Another comprehensive training provided the instructors and tutors an opportunity to learn the stages of play and literacy development. The ELDI Coordinators provide individual and group mentoring to the instructors and tutors regionally.

Academic Core

The Academic Core team noted several accomplishments towards meeting measurable outcomes as detailed in the CSDB Strategic Plan. The Academic Core has four target areas:

- A. Curriculum—The 2006/07 school year was the first full year of implementation of CSDB's new academic curriculum. This curriculum has already been aligned with Colorado State Standards. Prior to implementing the curriculum, several staff members were involved in identifying and ordering text materials, formation of Professional Learning Communities (PLC)/curriculum teams for each subject area, and establishing other cross-curriculum support teams. All of these teams are operational, have developed data-tracking systems, and are making good progress towards identified objectives.
- B. Mainstreaming: CSDB continues to provide mainstreaming opportunities for our students. Students can take classes that are unavailable at CSDB at local schools and colleges. Students attending public schools also benefit from social interaction with typical peers. The Academic Core team has developed a sub-committee to address revising procedures for our students to be involved in a mainstream setting. Mainstreaming opportunities also include distance learning, on-line classes, and specialized distance learning programs such as provided by The Hadley School for the Blind.
- C. Assessment: Measurable outcomes that have been accomplished include the development of testing calendars and schedules, as well as methods to display and compare data related to student achievement.

CSDB's curriculum/assessment staff and PLC members have identified a variety of assessment strategies to be used in our schools. These include tools for formative, on-going measurement as well as annual standardized measurement. In addition to CSAP and CSAP-A testing, we have implemented annual achievement testing to track growth over time. High school students are also involved in college entrance examinations such as the ACT Test.

- D. Technology: The Academic Core team, along with the CSDB administration, recognized the need for an educational technology coordinator. One of the first measurable outcomes in this area was the employment of an Educational Technology specialist. Not only are there particular concerns for using common technology (computers, audio/video playback devices, etc.) with our students, but we need to deal with some highly specialized technology for students who are deaf or blind. This technology frequently employs expensive state-of-the-art devices with extensive training needs for staff, which is

important and necessary in order for CSDB to serve as a statewide resource for students with a hearing or vision disability.

The CSDB Education Technology coordinator is working with both schools to maximize student learning with technology in addition to forming a team to identify equipment and training needs of our respective schools.

Secondary Vocational Job Skills

The On-the-Job-Training (OJT) pilot program for seniors was developed and began this fall. Of the 24 seniors participating in the OJT program, 14 have been placed into community jobs for three class periods Monday through Thursday and ten more are developing their work skills in on-campus jobs. Both teacher and employer evaluations of job performance are conducted on a regular basis.

On Fridays, these students participate in a class to enhance their job skills. This includes job-seeking skills (developing a portfolio, resumes, cover letters, interviewing, etc.), basic living skills (handling money and personal banking) and job-keeping skills (positive work ethic, workplace boundaries, work attire and integrity). Two students, so far, have been offered jobs after they graduate from CSDB.

Transition

The Transition Team met 31 of the 33 measurable objectives from last year. The accomplishments of the Transition Team and students were in the areas of Assistive Technology, Post-Secondary Education/Training, Independent Living Skills, Preparedness, and Transition-to-Life. Students are taking courses at the local community college in Culinary Arts, Auto Body, and Computer Graphics. Several students are taking courses in local colleges and studying disciplines such as Psychology, Radio Broadcasting, Art, and Business. Some students are employed within the community and on campus in the areas of clerical, laundry, and auto-detailing.

Multiple Disabilities

The Multiple Disabilities Workgroup met three of the six measurable objectives from last year. The accomplishments were in the areas of Life-Centered Career Education, Independent Living Skills, Recreational/ Leisure Skills, Social Interaction Skills, and Travel Skills. Juniors and Seniors with Multiple Disabilities are learning to take public transportation in the Colorado Springs area and are involved in community recreation/ leisure activities weekly. Some students are involved with ARC, Goodwill, and Silver Key where they are learning to volunteer with employees/clients within these organizations. Through involvement within the community, these students are showing progress in independent living and social interaction skills. The Multiple Disabilities Workgroup is working closely with the Transition and Secondary Job Skills Workgroups. The big effort this year will be to host training for parents of students who are multiply disabled in the spring of 2008.

4. How is the additional money provided to you in FY 2007-08 being used to achieve your goals? What improvements are you making in your outputs?

Response:

The Early Literacy Development Initiative (ELDI) is a family-centered literacy program. The program relies on several communication approaches, including sign language for some, to teach parents who are hearing to read to their children who are deaf or hard of hearing— an essential element for every child's later academic achievement.

The Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind (CSDB) is spending the approved funding for early literacy development programs in accordance with the budget. The majority of the funds (75%) are used for services, materials and assessments. The remaining 25% are used for program and assessment coordination.

Currently, there are 174 children and their families receiving literacy and pre-literacy services through the ELDI program. The number of families proposed to receive services when the decision item was requested was 175. Of the 174 children, 51 children have another primary language in the home that is not English. This number has more than doubled since the program started. Forty-six of those 51 children have family members who use Spanish as their primary language. Twenty of the 174 children have additional disabilities.

Currently, we have 68 trained instructors located around the state. CSDB is providing services to families in the following counties: Mesa, La Plata, Montezuma, El Paso, Eagle, Summit, Pitkin, Pueblo, Alamosa, Boulder, Adams, Morgan, Larimer, Weld, Archuleta, Montrose, Delta, Teller, Jefferson, Clear Creek, Denver, Arapahoe, Douglas, Broomfield, Elbert, Hinsdale-Lake City, Cortez, Fremont, and Garfield.

We provided three regional trainings to the ELDI instructors. The trainings focused on the implementation of new procedures and forms, new assessment procedures, and strategies to support family involvement. A comprehensive training was also provided to promote and foster early literacy development. Future trainings for providers will focus on administering the assessments, promoting literacy development, and increasing family involvement.

The evaluation of program participants includes establishing a baseline and assessments at regular intervals. We are tracking demographics, hearing loss, amplification, communication choice, and family dynamics. We have completed an assessment plan that measures program utilization, use of books, parent involvement, parent satisfaction, parent outcomes (sign language skills and parental engagement), and child outcomes (spoken and sign language skills, pre-literacy and literacy skills).

In a recent parent satisfaction survey, parents reported an average overall rating of the ELDI program as 4.7 on a scale of 1 (very poor) to 5 (excellent). The programs were rated as either "very good" or "excellent" by 98% of the parents.

We will complete utilization information and child outcomes by June of 2008. Future assessments will include a family assessment to provide objective information regarding provision of services, skills of the providers, and additional information requested by the family.

CSDB has worked collaboratively with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DHS/ DDD), within the Colorado Department of Human Services, to develop the response to the decision item. CSDB has also communicated with Lead Part C Coordinator, and providers have worked with local Part C agencies.

We are implementing video-conferencing to provide ELDI services to families in remote/rural regions of Colorado. A provider will contact a family through available technology providing the services that are typically provided in-home. This additional component will enable providers to service families without incurring additional travel expenses involved in reaching the rural areas.

Other

5. Please briefly discuss your request for authority to collect and spend additional conference fees to increase training and education opportunities.

Response:

CSDB staff will discuss this issue with the committee.